

REMARKS

At the time of the Office Action dated October 2, 2003, claims 1-18 were pending. Of those claims, claims 1-14 stand rejected and claims 15-18 stand objected.

Applicant acknowledges, with appreciation, the Examiner's indication that claims 15-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 14 have been amended, and claims 10 and 15-18 have been canceled. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. Specifically, Applicant has amended claims 1, 5 and 7 to include the limitations recited in allowable claims 15, 16 and 17, respectively. Claim 9 has been amended to include the limitations recited in claim 10 and allowable claim 18. Claims 11 and 14 have also been amended to be dependent on claim 9.

Applicant submits that the §102(e) rejection of claims 1 and 7, and the §103(a) rejection of claims 5 and 9 have been rendered moot because the limitations recited in the allowable claims were respectively added to claims 1, 5, 7 and 9. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejections of those claims is respectively solicited.

Dependent claims 2-4, 6, 8 and 11-14 should be patentable because those dependent claims contain all the limitations recited in independent claims 1, 5, 7 and 9. Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal of the rejections of claims 2-4, 6, 8 and 11-14.

Accordingly, it is urged that the application in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicant's attorney at the telephone number shown below.

09/983,074

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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